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SYRIA-JORDAN: Syria reopens border with Jordan in
apparent show of Arab unity. [REDACTED] (Page 5)

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SYRIA-JORDAN: THE MOTIVATION BEHIND SYRIA'S REOPENING OF ITS BORDERS WITH JORDAN WAS PROBABLY A DESIRE TO PRODUCE A SHOW OF ARAB UNITY IN THE FACE OF POSSIBLE FURTHER CLASHES WITH ISRAEL. OTHER ARAB STATES MAY HAVE PRESSED SYRIA TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH JORDAN.

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THE ANNOUNCEMENT REPORTEDLY WAS A COMPLETE SURPRISE TO THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT; THE OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION WAS RECEIVED IN AMMAN AN HOUR AFTER THE PUBLIC RELEASE FROM DAMASCUS. THERE HAS BEEN NO SUGGESTION OF A JORDANIAN QUID PRO QUO, AND PARTICULARLY NO INDICATION THAT AMMAN WOULD MEET SYRIA'S DEMANDS THAT THE FEDAYEEN BE WELCOMED BACK. AMMAN VIEWS THE SYRIAN MOVE AS CONFIRMATION OF THE CORRECTNESS OF ITS POLICY TOWARD THE FEDAYEEN AND AS THE RESULT OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC PRESSURE ON DAMASCUS TO REMOVE ALL RESTRICTIONS ON TRANSIT TRADE GOING TO SAUDI ARABIA AND THE PERSIAN GULF. ANY PLEA BY DAMASCUS THAT JORDAN ONCE AGAIN AID IN RE-ESTABLISHING THE "EASTERN FRONT" WILL ALSO GET LITTLE MORE THAN SYMBOLIC ACCEPTANCE FROM KING HUSAYN.

DAMASCUS UNILATERALLY CLOSED ITS BORDERS WITH JORDAN, INCLUDING BOTH AIR AND LAND ROUTES, IN JULY 1971 AS AN ECONOMIC BLOCKADE MEASURE AFTER JORDAN HAD MANAGED TO SUPPRESS VIRTUALLY ALL PALESTINIAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY BOTH WITHIN AND FROM JORDANIAN TERRITORY. SYRIA HAD ALSO CHARGED JORDAN WITH

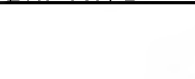
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HAVING REOPENED BRIDGES WITH ISRAEL. THE INITIAL CLOSURE BROUGHT THE BULK OF INTER-ARAB TRANSIT TRADE THROUGH JORDAN TO A STANDSTILL, BUT THE TIGHT RESTRICTIONS WERE RELAXED AFTER THE FIRST FEW MONTHS.

LIFTING THE BORDER RESTRICTIONS SHOULD BENEFIT THE JORDANIAN ECONOMY BY PERMITTING A FREER FLOW OF BOTH MANUFACTURED AND AGRICULTURAL GOODS--PARTICULARLY PHOSPHATE ORE WHICH IS ONE OF JORDAN'S MAJOR EXPORTS.



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